

How We Interpret Scripture

Martin Luther: {They [prophets] have a queer way of talking, like people who, instead of proceeding in an orderly manner, ramble off from one thing to the next, so that you cannot make head or tail of them or see what they are getting at. [Quoted in Klein, Blomberg & Hubbard, *Intro to Biblical Interpretation*, 370]}

Hermeneutics: “the task of explaining the meaning of the Scriptures”

ἐρμηνεύω = “to explain, interpret, or translate”

Luke 24:27

Exegesis: “to draw out the meaning of a text”

ἐξηγέομαι = “to lead out; make known; describe, explain, expound, interpret”

Over against **eisegesis** “reading into the text”

Grammatical-historical Exegesis

1. Grammatical = study the language of the original text (or translations)

Words, grammar, syntax

2. Historical = study the specific cultural context of the original text

Who – author & recipients

When & where – culture (politics, economics, social), religion & geography

Why – historical, authorial purpose

COMA method of Bible study (David Helm)

Context

Observation

Meaning

Application

Context

1. Historical - Are there any clues about the historical circumstances under which it was written?

Who –

Human author (Rev 1:1-4, 9; 22:8)

Divine author (Rev 1:4b-5, 8, 10-11)

Recipients (Rev 1:1-4, 11)

When & where – culture (politics, economics, social), religion & geography

Why – historical, authorial purpose

Are there any people or places (in Rev 20) mentioned that you aren't familiar with?

Places

People

2. Literary - What sort of writing is this (what is the literary genre)?

Epistle (1:4, 11) ?

Apocalypse (1:1) ?

Prophecy (1:3; 22:6-7, 10, 18-19) ?

4 interpretive approaches to Revelation:

1) Preterist

2) Historical

3) Idealist

4) Futurist

Interpreting visionary prophetic-apocalyptic genre of Revelation:

1) Vision

2) Linguistic

3) Referential

4) Symbolic

3. *Canonical - What has happened so far? How does this text relate to other parts of the book?*

How would you outline the whole letter?

- 4 references markers to “what must take place” Daniel 2:28-29, 45:
- 4 reference markers to “in the Spirit”:
- Interlocking : hinge/transition sections that close one and start another

What is the sequence between Revelation 19 and 20?

Chronological sequence (future end-time events)?

Argument #1: Use of Καὶ εἶδον to indicate historical sequence

Argument #2: Expect Satan to be dealt with right after Beast & False Prophet

Argument #3: Daniel 7

Thematic sequence (recapitulation)?

Argument #1: Use of καί

Argument #2: Revelation 20 parallels Revelation 12

Argument #2: Allusion to Ezekiel 38-39 in Rev 19:17-21 & 20:8-10

Argument #3: Chiastic structure of ch. 17-22

Are other bits of Scripture mentioned or alluded to in the passage? What part do these ‘memories’ play in the text?

Revelation 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19

Daniel

Ezekiel 38-39

Observations on Revelation 20:1-10

1. Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text?
2. Are there any grammatical questions to ask?
3. What are the key words? What words or ideas are repeated?
4. What images are used in the passage? What effect do they have?

Places

1) heaven (οὐρανός = heaven, sky - 20:1, 9)

2) bottomless pit (ἄβυσσος = netherworld, abyss - 20:1)

Rev 9:1-11; 11:7; 17:8

3) thrones (20:4)

3a) Throne of God (1:4; 3:21; 4:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10; 5:1, 6, 7, 11, 13; 6:16; 7:9, 10, 11, 15, 17; 8:3; 14:3; 16:17; 19:4, 5; 21:3, 5; 22:1, 22:3)

3b) Thrones of the 24 elders (Rev 4:4; 11:16)

3c) Throne of Satan (and the Beast) (2:13; 13:2; 16:10)

3d) White throne (20:11, 12)

4) four corners of the earth (20:8)

Job 37:3; Isa 11:12; Ezek 7:2; Rev 7:1

5) over the broad plain of the earth (20:9)

Rev 16:16; Zechariah 14

6) the camp of the saints (20:9)

7) the beloved city (20:9)

8) lake of fire and sulfur (20:10)

Rev 19:20; 20:14-15; 21:8

9) prison (20:7)

Objects

1) key (20:1)

Rev 1:17-18; 3:7; ~6:8; 9:1; Mt 16:19

2) chain (20:1)

3) image (of the beast – 20:4)

Rev 13:15-17

4) mark on their foreheads and hands (20:4)

Rev 13:15-17

Time

1) thousand years (χίλιοι = thousand, έτος = year - 20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

2) little time (μικρός = little; χρόνος = time - 20:3)

Rev 12:12 (όλίγον καιρόν = short time)

3) day and night forever and ever (20:10)

People-Beings

1) angel (άγγελος = angel, messenger - 20:1)

2) Dragon (δράκων = dragon - 20:2)

Rev 12:3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17; 13:2, 4, 11; 16:13

2b) Serpent (όφις = snake, serpent - 20:2)

Rev 12:9, 14, 15

2c) Devil (Διάβολος = devil - 20:2, 10)

Rev 2:10; 12:9, 12

2d) Satan (Σατανάς = Satan - 20:2, 7)

Rev 2:9, 13, 24; 3:9

3) Nations (ἔθνος = people, nation, Gentiles, pagans - 20:3)

4) the souls of those beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God (20:4)

5) those who had not worshipped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands (20:4)

Rev 13:15-17

6) the rest of the dead (20:5)

7) the one who shares in the first resurrection - 20:6 (ὁ ἔχων μέρος ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει τῇ πρώτῃ)

8) priests of God (ἱερεῖς τοῦ θεοῦ - 20:6)

Rev 1:5-6; 5:9-10

9) Gog (Γώγ) & Magog (Μαγώγ) - 20:8

Ezek 38-39

10) Beast (θηρίον - 20:10)

11) False Prophet (ψευδοπροφήτης - 20:10)

Events & Activities

1) Activities directed at the dragon:

1a) seized (20:2)

1b) bound (20:2)

1c) threw him (20:3, 9)

1d) shut it (20:3)

1e) sealed it over him (20:3)

1f) be released (20:3, 7)

2) Activities of the dragon:

πλανάω (to lead astray, deceive; 8x - 20:3, 8, 10)

Rev 2:20; 12:9

Rev 13:11-17; 19:20

The Second Beast – the False Prophet

Rev 18:23

Babylon the Great

3) Events & Activities for God's people:

3a) authority to judge (20:4)

3b) reign (βασιλεύω = rule, reign - 20:6)

3c) to live (ζάω - 20:4, 5)

3d) the first resurrection (ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη - 20:5, 6)

4) the second death (20:6)

Rev 2:11 “¹¹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by *the second death*.”

Rev 21:6-8 “⁶ And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is *the second death*.”

5) the thousand years are ended (20:5, 7)

6) Activities of the nations. Gog & Magog

6a) gather for battle – march – surround (20:8-9)

Ezekiel 38:2-8; 39:2

Zechariah 12-14

Zephaniah 3

Rev 16:14; 19:19

6b) consumed by fire (20:9)

7) torment of the Devil, Beast & False Prophet (20:10)

What happens to Satan during the millennium (20:1-3)?

Is the activity of Satan curtailed or ceased?

Position-1: Satan's activity is curtailed

Argument #1: The "key" imagery is figurative for the authority of Christ over Satan

Rev 1:17-18; 3:7; 9:1; Matt 16:19

Argument #2: The casting down and binding of Satan during Jesus' ministry

John 12:31-32; Luke 10:16-20; Mt 12:28-29

Argument #3: The curtailment of deception is loss of authority and power for Satan

- Therefore, Satan no longer has authority over Death & Hades {so Beale}

Col 2:15; Mt 16:18; Heb 2:14

- Gospel witness going forth to all nations

John 12:31-32

- Cannot deceive or destroy God's people

2 Thess 2:1-12 (see also Rev 1:5-6; 5:9-10; 6:11; 7:1-8)

Position-2: Satan's activity fully ceases for a time

Argument #1: Understanding *deception* in the context of Revelation

Rev 9:1-11; 2:20; 12:9; 13:11-17; 19:20; 18:23; 20:8-10

Argument #2: NT description of Satan's present activity

2 Cor 4:4; 1 Pet 5:8; 1 Jn 5:19

Argument #3: Victory over Satan is through a series of battles {Vlach, 64}:

1 Judged and cast down from heaven (Is 14:12-15; Ezek 28:11-19)

2 Jesus demonstrated power through earthly ministry (casting out demons; Mt 12:28)

3 Jesus victory over Satan at the cross (Col 2:15)

4 Satan thrown from heaven for a short time before return of Jesus (Rev 12:7-9)

5 Satan bound in pit for 1000 years at return of Jesus (Rev 20:1-3)

6 Satan sent to lake of fire for eternal punishment (Rev 20:7-10)

What is the "first resurrection" and "come to life" during the millennium (20:4-6)?

5. *Are there repetitions or multiple instances of similar ideas? Do these repetitions make a particular point, or point to the structure of the passage?*
6. *Paying attention to when the prophet is speaking and when God is speaking, what does the passage tell us about God's plans? What does it tell us about God's character?*
7. *What kind of human behavior, if any, is condemned or rewarded? What response is called for (if any)?*
8. *How does the passage seek to reveal what God is like? Where in this passage might we find hope for men and women?*
9. *Is there a crisis in the passage? What is the tension/conflict about, and how does it relate to readers?*
10. *What is the main point (or points)?*